

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An adjustable pier for supporting a structure on a base, said pier comprising:

a lower support member comprising a base and a vertically extending sidewall attached to said base, said base and said sidewall defining an internal chamber, said sidewall having a first end and a second end, said first end being vertically spaced beneath said second end, said base having an upper surface and a lower surface, said upper surface of said base being exposed to said internal chamber and said first end of said sidewall terminates at said upper surface of said base, said lower support member having a lateral access opening, said lateral access opening having a height, said lateral access opening being located between said first end and said second end of said sidewall and said height is equal to the distance between said first end and said second end of said sidewall; and

~~an upper support member at least partly received in the internal chamber and extending upwardly from the lower support member,~~

said upper support member being upwardly shiftable relative to the lower support member,

said sidewall of the lower support member defining a pair of vertically extending grooves,

said upper support member presenting a pair of projections at least partly received in the grooves so that relative lateral shifting and relative rotation of the upper and lower support members is inhibited,

~~said lower support member defining an opening for providing lateral access to the internal chamber from outside the lower support member,~~

said internal chamber being configured to receive the upper support member,

~~said opening having a height that is at least 50% of the maximum height of the upper support member; and~~

a stop member received in said internal chamber between said base and said upper support member, said stop member further being a rigid member that is to be inserted into said internal chamber in its rigid form.

2. (Original) The adjustable pier of claim 1,
said upper and lower support members being telescopically intercoupled.

3. (Currently Amended) The adjustable pier of claim 1,
said height of said lateral access opening ~~having a height that is being~~ at least 6 inches.

4. (Currently Amended) The adjustable pier of claim 1; and,
[[a]] said stop member being a permanently rigid structure ~~disposed between the upper
and lower support members and below the bottom of the upper support member;
said stop member being at least substantially received in the internal chamber.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The adjustable pier of claim [[4]] 1,
said stop member comprising a cured grout.

6. (Original) The adjustable pier of claim 5,
said cured grout filling substantially all of the internal chamber located below the upper
support member.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) The adjustable pier of claim [[8]] 1,
said grooves extending substantially linearly for at least 6 inches,
said projections extending substantially linearly for at least 3 inches.

10. (Original) The adjustable pier of claim 1; and
a metallic bearing device coupling the upper support member to the structure.

11. (Original) The adjustable pier of claim 10,

said metallic bearing device including a lower section and an upper section,
said lower section being rigidly coupled to the upper support member,
said upper section being rigidly coupled to the structure,
said upper and lower sections being hingedly intercoupled.

12. (Currently Amended) The adjustable pier of claim 1,
said lower support member presenting a pair of inwardly and oppositely facing inner
surfaces,
each of said inner surfaces defining at least a portion of the internal chamber,
each of said inner surfaces including said vertically ~~a first upwardly~~ extending grooves ~~or~~
~~a first projection~~.

13. (Currently Amended) The adjustable pier of claim 12,
said upper support member presenting a pair of outwardly and oppositely facing outer
surfaces,
each of said outer surfaces including one of said ~~a second upwardly extending groove or~~
~~a second~~ projections.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The adjustable pier of claim 1,
said structure being a residential home,
said base being a spread footing or a grade beam.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) ~~The support system of claim 17;~~ An adjustable support system for supporting a building structure on a relatively unstable soil, said support system comprising:

a base member supported by the soil;

an adjustable pier supported on the base member, said pier including a lower support member coupled to the base member and an upper support member telescopically intercoupled with the lower support member; and

a bearing device including a lower section rigidly coupled to the upper support member and an upper section rigidly coupled to the building structure, said upper and lower sections being hingedly intercoupled,

said lower support member defining an internal chamber for receiving the upper support member,

said lower support member defining an opening for providing lateral access to the internal chamber from outside the lower support member,

said opening having a height that is at least 50% of the maximum height of the upper support member

said opening having a height that is at least 6 inches,

said opening extending along substantially the entire height of the internal chamber.

19. (Currently Amended) The support system of claim [[16]] 18,
said lower support member surrounding the upper support member on at least three sides.

20. (Currently Amended) The support system of claim [[16]] 18,
said lower member presenting a pair of opposing inwardly facing inner surfaces,
said upper support member presenting a pair of outwardly facing outer surfaces,
each of said outer surfaces being disposed adjacent a respective inner surface,

each pair of adjacent inner and outer surfaces having an elongate groove associated with one of the surfaces and an elongated projection associated with the other of the surfaces, with the elongated projection being received in the elongated groove.

21. (Currently Amended) The support system of claim [[16]] 18; and
a cured grout disposed in the internal chamber below the bottom of the upper support member,
said cured grout contacting the upper and lower support members to thereby prevent downward shifting of the upper support member relative to the lower support member.

22. (Currently Amended) The support system of claim [[16]] 18,
said base member being formed primarily of concrete,
said pier being formed primarily of concrete,
said bearing device being formed primarily of a metal.

23. (Currently Amended) The support system of claim [[16]] 18,
said building structure being a residential home,
said base member being a grade beam or a spread footing.

24 - 35. (Canceled)